

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2755
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA PRIORITY
USMISSION USNATO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR
AMCONSUL ADANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 5416

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, MASS, MARR, TU, CY
SUBJECT: TURKISH GOVERNMENT REACTION TO BYRD AMENDMENT

1. FONMIN OKCUN AND MFA SEC GEN ELEKDAG WERE CLOSETED FOR A COUPLE OF HOURS MIDDAY JULY 26 TO CONSIDER TURKEY'S PUBLIC RESPONSE TO THE BYRD AMENDMENT AND THE RELATED SENATE VOTE TO LIFT THE EMBARGO. ELEKDAG CALLED ME IN LATE AFTERNOON TO HAND ME ECEVIT'S PERSONAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE PUBLIC STATEMENT WHICH HAD EMERGED FROM THAT MEETING (TRANSMITTED SEPTEL.) (PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE HAD CALLED US EARLIER TO ASK US NOT TO SEND OUR OWN TRANSLATION FROM THE TURKISH SINCE ECEVIT WANTED TO BE SURE WE GOT IT RIGHT.)

2. ELEKDAG SAID THAT TURKISH CONCERNS AND ANXIETIES ABOUT THE EFFECT OF THE BYRD AMENDMENT REMAINED VERY MUCH AS EXPLAINED TO ME EARLIER BY OKCUN AND TO NIMETZ BY ESENBEL IN WASHINGTON.
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NONETHELESS, ECEVIT HAD TRIED, IN DRAFTING THE PUBLIC STATEMENT, TO "ELIMINATE THE NEGATIVE AND EMPHASIZE THE POSITIVE" IN THE SITUATION. ELEKDAG SAID THE ECEVIT GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN STRIVING TO SOLVE THE CYPRUS PROBLEM AND TO MAKE PROGRESS ON THE AEGEAN ISSUES IRRESPECTIVE OF THE STATE OF ITS SECURITY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES OR THE EXISTENCE OF THE EMBARGO. ECEVIT WAS DETERMINED TO CONTINUE WITH THESE EFFORTS. THE TURKS

WERE CONCERNED, HOWEVER, THAT THE GREEKS AND THE GREEK CYPRIOTS WOULD MISINTERPRET THE BYRD AMENDMENT AND WOULD RESORT TO "MANEUVERS" IN ORDER TO INFLUENCE CONGRESS. TURKEY, HE SAID, WORRIES THAT THIS WILL HAVE AN UNFAVORABLE IMPACT ON NEGOTIATIONS BOTH OVER THE AEGEAN AND CYPRUS.

3. I SAID THAT I FELT THESE CONCERNS WERE WELL UNDERSTOOD IN WASHINGTON, BUT UNDERTOOK TO UNDERLINE THEM AGAIN IN REPORTING THIS CONVERSATION. AFTER READING THE ECEVIT STATEMENT, I SAID IT STRUCK ME AS A VERY CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONSE. THE REST OF THE CONVERSATION CONSISTED OF MY REPLIES TO A SERIES OF QUESTIONS REGARDING THE MECHANICS AND PROBABLE OUTCOME OF ACTION IN THE HOUSE. I TOOK A OPTIMISTIC LINE, ASSERTING THAT THE MARGIN IN THE SENATE WAS VERY ENCOURAGING, BUT THAT THE VOTING IN THE HOUSE WOULD BE CLOSE.

COMMENT: THE GOT'S RELATIVELY SOFT REACTION TO THE BYRD AMENDMENT SHOULD NOT MISLEAD WASHINGTON INTO THINKING THERE ARE NO REAL CONCERNS HERE. THE MAJOR OPPOSITION LEADER, DEMIREL, HAS ALREADY MADE A STRONG STATEMENT SAYING THAT THE EMBARGO HAS NOT REALLY BEEN LIFTED. THIS PLACES ECEVIT IN THE POSITION OF ARGUING THE MERITS OF A PIECE OF FOREIGN LEGISLATION ABOUT WHICH HE HIMSELF HAS DOUBTS. IN PARTICULAR HE IS GENUINELY CONCERNED THAT THE LANGUAGE OF THE AMENDMENT IS AN INVITATION TO THE GREEKS AND GREEK CYPRIOTS TO BING PRESSURE ON HIM THROUGH THE US. HE CLEARLY SEES, HOWEVER, THE NECESSITY AND

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THE WISDOM OF "ACCENTING THE POSITIVE." FURTHERMORE, ECEVIT AND OTHER SENIOR TURKISH OFFICIALS SEEM TRULY APPRECIATIVE OF THE LENGTHS TO WHICH THE PRESIDENT AND HIS ADMINISTRATION HAVE GONE TO GET THE EMBARGO REMOVED. ALL THIS MAY CHANGE TOMORROW, BUT AT THE MOMENT WE BELIEVE THE TURKS WILL CONTINUE TO GRUMBLE, BUT ALSO WILL CONTINUE BASICALLY TO BE POSITIVE. WE ARE, OF COURSE, VERY ENCOURAGED BY THE TONE OF ECEVIT'S STATEMENT AND BY THE TONE OF ELEKDAG'S PRESENTATION TO ME-- A TONE THAT IS IN MARKED CONTRAST WITH DEMARCHE MADE BY FONMIN OKCUN.

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